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City-Pick
Dublin

Edited by Heather Reyes

Published by Oxygen Books

Extract

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city-pick

DUBLIN

Oxygen Books

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Editor's Note

It has been a particular pleasure to edit a collection of writing on Dublin. My first visit to the city felt like a home-coming: since the age of eleven, when I began my education with the Ursuline Sisters in a school near London, I have lived with the voices of Ireland in my head. A non-Catholic 'scholarship girl', this was my first encounter both with nuns and with Irishness: the distinctive lilt and phraseology of Irish English was as fascinating to me as the traditions of St Patrick's Day when the sisters would appear with bright clumps of shamrock fastened to their sober black habits and girls of Irish descent were allowed to flout the strict uniform rules and sport a tin brooch – a golden harp on a piece of folded green ribbon – and even green ribbons in their hair. The nuns – intelligent, loving, dedicated, strict but broad-minded and independent women – instilled, along with the rules of Latin grammar and quadratic equations, a great respect for the country from which most of them had come. When, as a student of literature, I discovered it to be also the country of Swift, Wilde, Shaw, Joyce, Beckett and a host of other great writers, I often wondered how such a small country with a difficult history could have produced so many great people.

This collection aims to be a lyrical but realistic exploration of and tribute to Ireland's capital. If there are fewer foreign voices in *city-pick DUBLIN* than in other volumes in the series so far, it is mainly because a city so rich in writers should be allowed to speak for itself. With so much to choose from, there are inevitable omissions – sometimes the result of hard decisions due to lack of space, sometimes to 'rights' difficulties, sometimes from the wish to give exposure to lesser-known voices rather than the already famous, and sometimes simply from personal taste. In the case of James Joyce, I felt that those who already

love his work do not need it repeated here, while those yet to be persuaded of its great riches and pleasures could hardly be converted by a short extract: this is why I have chosen passages that give a way into Joyce, rather than face the hopeless task of choosing a 'representative' passage (which is impossible).

I hope the reader will find here, along with a little of the 'expected', some less familiar voices and surprising gems, and the inspiration to seek out the whole texts from which their favourite extracts are taken – and to look more deeply and widely into the great treasure chest of writing about this great European city which even names bridges after its writers.

Heather Reyes

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Reading Dublin
by Orna Ross

Some years ago, I had occasion to bring a visiting creative writing professor from Chicago to visit Dublin's Writers' Museum. I still recall the delight with which he paused on its steps. "How wonderful it must be," he breathed, "to live in a city that so reveres its writers."

Well sometimes, maybe, yes. All Dubliners, from politicians to taxi drivers, are proud of the city's literary reputation. When ranked No 4 in a survey of literary destinations recently – behind London, Stratford-Upon-Avon and Edinburgh but ahead of New York, Paris and St Petersburg – the general feeling in Dublin was: shouldn't we have been No 1?

Okay, London might have its share of good writers and yes, Edinburgh is a UNESCO City of Literature, and all right, I suppose you have to hand it to Shakespeare but in a straight contest – great writers per head of population – isn't Dublin the clear winner?

Haven't we four Nobel prizewinners (Shaw, Yeats, Beckett and Heaney) out of only a million or so inhabitants? As well as the world's best novelist (Joyce) who should have got one too? Isn't our national theatre (the Abbey of Synge, Yeats, Gregory, O'Casey, Behan, Friel, Roche) known the world over and didn't we have enough playwrights left to storm the English stage while we were at it (Congreve, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Shaw, Wilde, McDonagh)?

Haven't we given the English language its best satirist (Swift) and a string of superlative short story writers (O'Flaherty, Lavin, Joyce, O'Connor, O'Faolain, Enright)? And let's not even get started on the novelists (Edgeworth, Stoker, Bowen, Murdoch, Keane, O'Brien, Tóibín, Banville,

O'Connor, Doyle, Enright again. And Joyce of course. Have we mentioned Joyce?)

Thus runs the literary propaganda, and it exerts a hold, even though we know that writing isn't produced by a place called Dublin but by a human imagination in harness to a blank page. Even though we know that some of the writers listed have only tenuous links with the city and others fled the place as fast as they could. Joyce spoke for many when he said: "How sick, sick, sick I am of Dublin! It is the city of failure, of rancour and of unhappiness, I long to be out of it."

"Don't mind him," the city shrugged in reply. "Didn't he spend the whole time he was away writing about us?"

And on it got with setting up The Bloomsday festival and The James Joyce Centre and putting his image on mugs and postcards and T-shirts to sell to all the lovely tourists who were arriving through those writings and who needed something to buy on their tribute trip.

Academics tend to be highly critical of such literary tourism. A recent book deems it an embarrassment, a naïve and "deeply counterintuitive response to the pleasures and possibilities of imaginative reading"[1]. Counterintuitive to that reader, perhaps, but not to the hundreds of thousands of visitors who flock to Dublin each year.

What is being contested here is ownership and of course nobody owns writing. Not the writer, not the reader, not the academic and certainly not the city. Creative writing is free as only an imaginative act can be, coming alive only in the creative act of reading.

When I first came to Dublin at the age of 17, I walked streets that were already familiar to me through my reading – books like Plunkett's *Strumpet City,* O'Brien's *Girl With Green Eyes,* O'Flaherty's *Mr Gilhooley,* Joyce's *Dubliners,* Stephen's *The*

1 Watson, N. *The Literary Tourist*.

Charwoman's Daughter and also a dusty box of very old penny- periodicals that had been preserved in date order by some word loving ancestor and passed down to my parents' bookshelf.

How the young me thrilled to these bulletins from Victorian Dublin life, high and low, especially the running stories with their cliffhangers and their summary of the previous episode and, especially, their edict that always sounded inside me like a fanfare heralding a new kingdom: *Now Read On*.

I was a literary cliché, one of those young readers who experiences the fictional as more real, more engaging, more alive than anyone in "real" life. Now I write myself and know that is just the kind of reader every writer wants. One who brings the same honesty, openness and receptivity to consuming a text that the writer tries to bring to creating it.

Other people might label it sad or nerdy but we who conjoin in imaginative intercourse know the truth: that "Now Read On" are, actually, the three most thrilling words in the English language.

* * *

Dublin used to like its writers dead. For the first fifty years of the Irish state, any living author who wrote a worthwhile word was censored and, often, hounded out[2]. Once their reputations were established abroad, and especially if they were safely deceased, the city would grasp them (if not their writing) to its bosom, like a pardoning parent, denying old differences while still excoriating their younger siblings.

This began to change in that time of great global shift: the late 1960s. Paris had the Molotov cocktails of *les événe-*

2 Victims of a raft of censorship law and obsessive right wing Roman Catholicism. The laws also denied most of the major writers of the twentieth century – Bellow, Faulkner, Gordimer, Hemingway, Koestler, Moravio, Nabokov, Proust, Sartre, Stead, Zola all had works banned – to Irish readers.

ments; San Francisco its Summer of Love; for Dublin, the old world ended with a whimper: legislation. Specifically, the dismantling of the shameful censorship law and the passing of a statute that enabled free secondary school education for all.

As liberating in their way as the more revolutionary uprisings elsewhere, it took time for the effects of these legislative changes to seep through. Now, forty years on, Dublin has become a city where reading and creative writing groups offer courses and mentoring at every level, from basic literacy to masterclass; where writers benefit from government funding for publishing enterprises, writer bursaries and tax breaks; where vibrant literary events of every size and type abound, from open-mic poetry slams in the local pub to major festivals attracting readers from all over the world.

Through it all, the love-affair with dead writers survives and even living writers can find themselves signed up in service to the economy, used to flog merchandise and pubs and the city itself. They tend to be deeply ambivalent about this, on the one hand, seeing it as a more sophisticated form of censorship, the hoopla drowning out truths emerging from contemporary pens; on the other understanding the impulse to honour writing, not just because it's in their own occupational interest but because writers, it's sometimes forgotten, are the most passionate of readers and as likely as any other reader to take a literary excursion. Some have even – whisper it! – been known to buy a mug.

I know I have continued to enjoy the multi-layered vision I first brought to Dublin and I regularly visit other literary haunts, where my own experience of place is adorned with versions that I-and-a-writer created earlier.

I believe there can be, and often is, magic in such visits. A kind of holiness. A tribute to the pleasure and knowledge gained through reading yes – but more than that too.

In a secular time, artists become very important because they are the only people offering up their lives to the pursuit of what Yeats called "Higher Things". This is why a literary jaunt can feel like a pilgrimage and why the bric-a-brac in the tourist shop so resembles the knick-knacks at Lourdes or Rome. Homage is being paid not just to the text but to the writer for keeping faith with the source of inspiration.

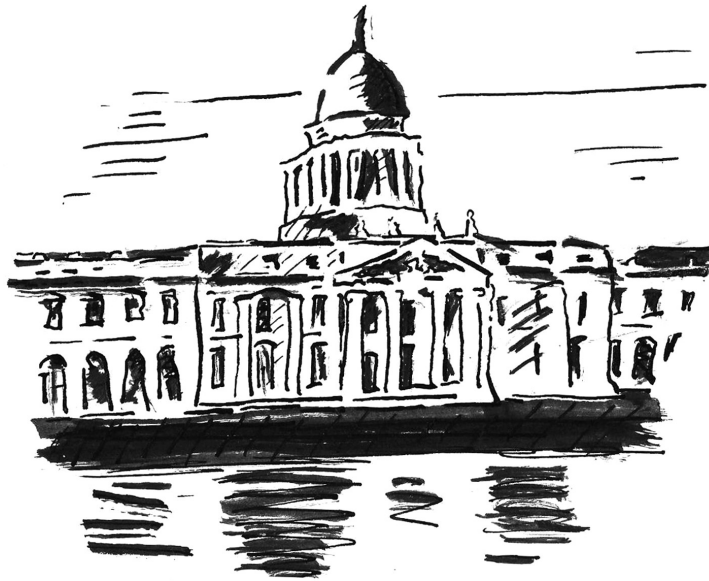
"There is only one perfection and only one search for perfection," Yeats said, and religion and art both originate in that search. In the materialist 21st century, we don't have a shared language with which to acknowledge this but we know it when we touch off it. And if we can't find the words, well, we can walk the streets, visit the birthplace, buy the mug with the quote on it or clink a glass of Guinness in the pub where words that have touched us, pleasured us, perhaps even changed us, were conjured up out of nothing.

It is only if we do all this *instead of* reading, if we substitute a commercial transaction for the writer's gift freely offered to us, that the souvenir mug becomes a muzzle akin to the censorship of old and the literary location a mere greasy till, its writer more read about than read.

We all know this. So we all know what to do.

Now read on.

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Dublin's fair city …

Dublin.

Plural proper noun.

There is a Dublin of the rich of course, and a Dublin of the poor. That's standard stuff. But there's more than that. The rich like a little multiplicity after all; the poor are wealthy in variation. And then there's the neither rich nor poor – the getting by, the middle mass, the bulk. Where do they live?

They live in Dublin with the others. A million kittens in a sack, down by the river.

Working Dublin, queer Dublin, junkie Dublin, media Dublin, party Dublin, executive Dublin, homeless Dublin, suburban Dublin, teenage Dublin, gangland Dublin, Dublin with the flags out, mother Dublin, culchie Dublin, Muslim Dublin, the wind ripped rain at eleven o'clock in the morning on Pearse Street in February Dublin, drunken Dublin, hungry Dublin, Dublin

of the vice squad and the syphilis outbreak, dancing Dublin, pro-Cathedral Dublin, writer's Dublin, politician's Dublin, Dublin on the telly, Bono's Dublin, Ronnie Drew's Dublin, Bloomsday Dublin, the Dublin of Arbour Hill and Kilmainham Jail, Gandon's Dublin, Durcan's Dublin, Teaching English as a Foreign Language Dublin, Jewish Dublin, the emigrant's Dublin, the immigrant's Dublin, Dublin where they beat you up, railings Dublin, Dublin where they rob you, fanlight Dublin, Dublin where they rape you, golf club Dublin, Dublin where they kill you, the American Dublin, the St Patrick's Day Dublin, the Phoenix Park Dublin, serial killer's Dublin, paradise, scary Dublin, money in brown envelopes Dublin, traffic jam Dublin, property Dublin, inept Dublin, the Dublin you can't afford, the Dublin that needs you, the Dublin that doesn't, Dublin with its view of the hills, Dublin with the sea in the bay and the river stumbling towards it, drunk.

Dublin.

Keith Ridgway, *The Parts* (2003)

* * *

Welcome to Dublin, a city – like all great cities – full of contradictions and variety, beauty and sadness, vibrant modernity and brooding history, where everything constantly changes … and yet so much stays the same. We set out for a walk with Honor Tracy, then go a little further with Neil Hegarty.

It was a bright sunny day with small fleecy clouds scudding over the sky. Having left my things at the hotel I went for a walk. The first hours in Dublin are always delightful, for the city throws all it has at the newcomer, discreetly flattering, gently soothing, feeding at once the eye and the imagination. The airs of grace and of leisure have not departed even if the society which gave them birth is past and gone. It is a city of ghosts, but ghosts of the so newly dead that something of their earthly presence still

lingers in the wide streets, the pleasant squares, that were their home; as you walk through them, you feel that Dublin still must be a bed of poetry and wit, almost you expect to see Yeats and A.E. passing each other in Merrion Square …

Honor Tracy, *Mind You, I've said Nothing!* (1953)

* * *

One of my favourite walks in Dublin is from the docks out to the Poolbeg Lighthouse. Surely, few capital cities can boast such an exhilarating walk: along the long, low South Wall breakwater, across which waves can pitch and wash in windy weather, from the mouth of the Liffey to a red-painted lighthouse which seems to stand suspended on the sea. The city vanishes behind me and all I can see is the lighthouse ahead, Howth stretched to the left, and an immensity of sky. There are great signs at the entrance to the walk warning against 'Danger', and warning me that I pass 'At My Own Risk'. But it's a risk worth taking, I think: as I walk into the horizon, the water laps and breaks on either side, and the air is full of a tang of salt. It is like being on a boat.

I reach the lighthouse and turn to go back: Dublin suddenly, startlingly opens up in the distance. The bend of the bay is even more pronounced from this angle and the land seems suddenly to envelop me. The view now is uncompromisingly industrial, but stark and beautiful still. Straight ahead, the red-and-white stripes of the Pigeonhouse power station chimneys loom up into the still, expansive sky. The Pigeonhouse stands in the estuary of the River Liffey and has become a de facto emblem of the city. Beyond it the dockyards and depots tread across the landscape for what seems like miles. From here, it seems as though the only way into Dublin is by water – up the Liffey to the quays of the city. […]

A little further up the Liffey, pushing against the river's flow as it empties into the Irish Sea, is the city centre itself. It's

heralded by the choking traffic on the quays and by the Georgian perfection of the Gandon-designed Custom House. There are glimpses of other buildings further from the water too: the Abbey Theatre on its shabby corner, close to the northern embankment; and the classical columns of the General Post Office a little further away on O'Connell Street. The curving façade of the old parliament building – now the Bank of Ireland – gleams near the southern bank of the river; beyond it is the austere West Front of Trinity College, its main adornment being the two statues of Burke and Goldsmith that flank the main entrance. Students and tourists swirl past these two statues by the thousand each day and probably few stop to think of their association with Dublin's 18th-century heyday, when they rubbed shoulders with other musicians, philosophers and writers – Handel and Arne and Swift – in the tiny city centre. I passed them daily for years and I scarcely so much as glanced at them.

However, the tourists certainly notice the other statue hereabouts: just beyond Trinity and a little further from the river stands Molly Malone herself, wheeling her wheelbarrow and sporting vast breasts that resemble a brace of butternut squash. Dubliners seldom notice her, of course, and maybe those that do are a little mortified at this monstrously well-endowed girl exposing herself so shamelessly at one of the city's busiest junctions, but visitors love her – and why not.

Neil Hegarty, *Waking Up In Dublin* (2004)

* * *

Even when you're feeling down and prone to see the ugly side of city life, the weather can suddenly change, lifting your spirits by showing you a very different Dublin.

The quays, with their muddy square-setts, are noisy and dirty as usual, and in the dimming light the waiting buses are dull blobs of

blue and yellow and red against the dull buildings. The Liffey is at lowest ebb, and its subaqueous population of forsaken buckets and weedy stones increases as I go rattling and banging up-stream on a wet tram-top. I return to the mud at Grattan Bridge, feeling I am rapidly approaching the stage of dejection which drives the strong-minded to a public-house, when from low down in the western sky there comes a gleam of yellow light, rapidly broadening and brightening. And then suddenly five great swans appear, flying down the centre of the river. In perfect formation, long necks outstretched, broad wings beating in unison, they sweep by majestically, a vision of pure beauty, gleaming plumage all snowy against the old houses opposite. While I still watch their receding forms fading into the smoky mist, a low red sun bursts out from underneath the last bank of cloud. It floods down the river; the long vista of dull houses lights up in a dozen lovely shades through a faint pink haze; the spires and towers behind stand up transfigured; the dirty water turns to gold and silver. One gazes at a dream city, beautiful beyond belief. And while I stand, a breath of softer air, bringing with it hope and a lifting of the spirit, comes from the west; the wind has changed.

Robert Lloyd Praeger, *A Populous Solitude* (1941)

* * *

In an early novel by William Trevor, the incorrigible photographer, Mrs Eckdorf, launches herself upon Dublin for the first time and quickly begins to learn something about the city and its inhabitants.

'I flew this morning from Munich, which is the city where currently I live. About the city we're approaching I know extremely little.'

'It's a good business town these days,' the man informed her.

'A fair city,' murmured Mrs Eckdorf more romantically. 'In Dublin's fair city: that's a line in an old-fashioned song.'

'Yes.'

'Some cities are fairer than others. In my work I notice that.'

Mrs Eckdorf went on speaking, saying she knew as little about the inhabitants of the city they were approaching as she did about the city itself. She had read somewhere that they were litter-bugs and disputatious, but she didn't at all mind that. Revolution had taken place in the city, she knew, and was glad that it had: it showed spirit to revel against *status quo*, it lent a certain pride to a people. She knew that the country of which the city was the capital was a land of legend and myth: she had seen a television programme about that, a programme that had shown old men talking and priests talking and children dancing in the stiff local manner. Vaguely at the time she had thought that she herself could have made more of it than the television people had, but it was not until years later, as a result of meeting with a barman on an ocean liner, that she had been moved to think about the city again. This man, telling her much besides, had said he hadn't been attracted by the place. He had walked through it in the rain, apparently, seeking solace and finding it hard to come by. A motor-car, moving gently in the night-time traffic, had struck him as he crossed a street and the driver had smiled and waved, as though the contact created a friendship between them. […]

In St Stephen's Green that morning the woman called Ivy Eckdorf took a photograph of a floating duck. She wore the same cream-coloured hat that she had worn in the aeroplane, and was dressed otherwise in a suit of pale linen over a cream-coloured blouse with buttons of pearl. Her finger-nails were lengthy, meticulously painted to match the shade of her mouth; her stockings were fine, the colour of honey; her flat-heeled shoes had soft wicker-work uppers and soles of a flexible leather. She carried a commodious cream-coloured handbag and about her neck, suspended by a thin length of plastic, hung the camera with which she had photographed the duck. It was an instrument of Japanese manufacture, a Mamiya.

'How charming!' murmured Mrs Eckdorf, referring to the duck and to other ducks that floated on the water in the park. 'What a truly attractive city!'

A man going by, a projectionist in a cinema, had an obscene thought about Mrs Eckdorf standing there, for she was a beautiful woman in her tall, angular way. She saw the man glancing at her and she guessed that in his mind he had already placed her on a bed and was unfastening her clothes. She smiled at him, quite pleased that he had paid her the compliment. 'You naughty chap!' she cried, and noted scarlet embarrassment spreading all over the man's face. He hurried on, and Mrs Eckdorf lifted her camera and photographed his retreating back.

An old woman spoke to her, asking for alms, her hand held slightly out. She said she would pray for Mrs Eckdorf, who told her to stand back a bit, which the woman did, imagining that money would follow. 'There are social services to see to you,' said Mrs Eckdorf, smiling more. She photographed the woman, explaining to her that her face would now travel all over the world. She spoke harshly when the beggar woman again asked for alms. 'Get off to hell,' she ordered angrily.

The woman went, and Mrs Eckdorf consulted her map. She saw the way to Thaddeus Street lay along York Street, over Aungier Street, past St Patrick's Cathedral, along the Coombe and then on and on. She did not much care for the look of this route. An instinct told her that a more roundabout one would provide her with greater interest. She turned her back on York Street and set off in another direction, towards the river.

Twenty minutes later, in Bachelors' Walk, she encountered two card-sharpers, one of whom carried a large cardboard box which bore the legend *Kellogg's Cornflakes The Sunshine Breakfast*. He was a red-haired man, tall and heavily constructed, with evasive eyes. His companion was smaller and excessively dirty. She photographed them and then moved on, only to find herself pursued by the men, who demanded money with

menaces, claiming that she had offered them money in return for permission to take their photographs. They reminded her that they had specially performed their trick on the cardboard box and had risked observation by plain-clothes police. All that, they said, they'd done to oblige her.

Mrs Eckdorf balanced her camera on the wall that ran above the river. She photographed two nuns crossing the Metal Bridge.

'Local interest,' she explained. 'There's local interest everywhere.'

'We're working men,' said the smaller man.

'You're local interest to me,' murmured Mrs Eckdorf, again setting her sights on the nuns.

'Excuse me, missus,' began the red-haired man in a threatening way, edging closer to Mrs Eckdorf, his shoulder actually touching her clothes.

'Buzz off,' said Mrs Eckdorf snappishly, thinking it was extraordinary the way people in this city were always asking for money.

'You promised us,' shouted the red-haired man. He took her elbow in his hand. He raised the cardboard box slightly in the air. 'You said a consideration, missus.'

Mrs Eckdorf stared into the eyes of the man and spoke while doing so. She told him to release her elbow and stand well back.

'I'm a professional photographer,' she said. 'I cannot possibly go paying out cash for every piece of local interest I find. You must see that.'

'I see nothing,' cried the red-haired man. 'We risked arrest standing up there, exposed for you –'

'There's a Superintendent in uniform,' said Mrs Eckdorf quietly, 'on the other side of the street.'

She waved at the Superintendent, who was strolling along, tapping the calf of his right leg with a cane. He was in the company of two members of his force, a pair of dignified Civic

Guards immaculately turned out. She lifted her camera and photographed the three of them. Then she trained her lens on the backs of the card-sharpers, who were sliding urgently away.

Having waved again at the Superintendent, she continued on her journey. She passed by the humped metal bridge and strode along Ormond Quay, occasionally snapping the shutter of her camera at people or vistas that took her fancy. […]

All over Dublin that lunchtime people from offices and shops took advantage of the sunshine; children, tired of the good weather, waited for the cinemas to open. Youths in open shirts crept over the grass in St Stephen's Green, causing the girls they crept upon to shriek. The card-sharpers whose photograph Mrs Eckdorf had taken spent part of their gains in a bread-shop in Mary Street, and the twins that had been that morning born in Coombe Maternity Hospital passed their first midday asleep and in health. The Indian doctor who had delivered them stood in the Municipal Art Gallery regarding the face of Lady Gregory as represented by the Italian artist Mancini. 'God give me patience,' said the manager of the hotel where Mrs Eckdorf had been staying. He had just been told that in his absence the luggage of Mrs Eckdorf had been forwarded to an hotel in Dolphin's Barn. 'Are you half-witted?' he noisily demanded of the untrained clerk who was responsible for the action, and the clerk replied that a clear message had been received from the lady, and that for his part he had done his best. 'You said to be always civil, sir,' he reminded the manager, who replied by depriving him of his position.

In Reuben Street the woman who had said to her priest that she was not ungrateful for the life she'd been given was measured by local undertakers. In a public house in York Street the old woman who had begged from Mrs Eckdorf poured the dregs from glasses into a can and thanked the publican for allowing her to do so. The cinema projectionist whom Mrs Eckdorf had

called a naughty chap hummed to himself in the projection room of one of the cinemas which children were preparing to enter.

It was a day in Dublin as any other, except that, being a Friday, less meat was consumed than on other days. The sun glittered on the water of the river, seagulls stood quietly on walls and parapets. At half past one the banks were open for business again, later the public houses closed for their quiet hour. […]

In Dublin the rain fell heavily that morning. Turf in public parks became soft underfoot and the unpainted wood of hoardings changed colour and soon could absorb no more. Water spilt from chutes, gutters ran, puddles were everywhere. Raindrops spattered on all the formal water of the Garden of Remembrance in Parnell Square and on the water in old horse-troughs, and on horses themselves standing drenched between the shafts of tourist jaunting-cars. Statues glistened: washed of their summer dust, gesturing figures seemed less jaded in their stance, eyes stared out with a liveliness. Rain ran on Robert Emmet and Henry Grattan, on Thomas Davis, on O'Connell with his guardian angels, and gentle Father Mathew, apostle of temperance. It dribbled from the moustached countenance of Lord Ardilaun and fell on Lecky and on William Conyngham, and on the empty pedestal of the Earl of Eglinton and Winton. It damped the heads of Mangan and Tom Kettle and the Countess Markievicz, it polished to a shine the copper-green planes of a tribute to Yeats, Moore and Burke, Wolfe Tone and Charles Stewart Parnell, Goldsmith and ghostly Provost Salmon: dead men of Ireland were that morning invigorated.

William Trevor, *Mrs Eckdorf in O'Neill's Hotel* (1969)

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If it's music you love, you'll feel at home in Dublin – along with some of the biggest names on the contemporary music scene.

Indicators of music, symbols of music – these cluster together to greet the ferry as it slows down and prepares to dock. Dublin seems to stretch out to welcome the visitor; long before the ferry arrives at its berth, the long arching coastline has embraced the ship and the traveller, the Dubliner coming home. On the port side of the ship, the high frowning wall of Bray Head gives way to the shelving shingles of Killiney beach, the spectacular houses at Sorrento Terrace and the medieval village of Dalkey on its rocky headland. In front of the village, wild goats roam on Dalkey Island and shelter in the shadow of its Martello tower. This stretch of coast is the home of Dublin's musical superstars, and the homes themselves are clearly visible from the ferries as they ply the route between Ireland and Wales. On this still evening, I can see the lights coming on over there too: in Bono's house which faces east on the edge of the sea, in the castellated mansion next door where Enya lives, well tucked out of sight. Lisa Stansfield has settled in Dalkey and drinks in Finnegan's pub beside the train station; I saw her there one warm night. Today, Dalkey's High Street is crammed full of restaurants, bars, delicatessens and expensive cars too. Housing in the area is firmly out of reach of most Dubliners, so they settle for visiting on a Sunday afternoon instead. I visit too sometimes, fancying myself quite the cosmopolitan as I brunch in a gastrobar called IN on the main street, browse in the Exchange bookshop, fire down an espresso in the Queen's, or gaze in staggered astonishment at the prices listed outside the über-trendy Kish restaurant. After all, there are no limits to trendy living …

Neil Hegarty, *Waking Up In Dublin: A Musical Tour of the Celtic Capital* (2004)

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A 'must see' for the first-time visitor to Dublin is Trinity College, where the Old Library contains the magnificent, world-famous Book of Kells.